

Remarks

The following is a response to the Office Action dated March 22, 2006.

Attached to this amendment are replacement sheets for the drawings with amendments to Figs. 1, 3, 4 and 5. The amendments add reference numerals to elements in the drawings that were previously not identified. For the convenience of the examiner, the amended figures are attached as Appendix "Annotated Sheet Showing Changes" to this Amendment, with the added reference numerals in red.

Amendment corresponding to the changes to the drawings are effected in paragraphs 0020 and 0021 of the specification, per the above amendment. Also per the above amendment, withdrawn claims 1-9 have been cancelled; claims 10, 16, 18 and 24 amended; and claims 27-28 added.

Claims 10 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sweeney et al. (US 5,599,318); and claims 11, 13-16 and 18-26 were rejected either under Sweeney individually or in combination with Burns (US 5,643,219) or Gyure et al. (US 5,681,295).

As amended, claims 10 and 18 each recite a unitary molded syringe that has a syringe barrel with a distal end that is separated from the needle hub that integrally extends from the distal portion of the syringe barrel so that an annular space separates the distal end of the syringe barrel from the needle hub. With such construction, the mating of the collar to which a needle protection housing is pivotally connected is facilitated due to the distal end of the syringe barrel being compressible when the collar makes contact therewith.

None of the prior art references discloses such construction at the syringe barrel which allows a collar to be mounted to the syringe barrel.

Although disclosing a needle hub 128 being integrally formed with the syringe barrel 162, Sweeney fails to disclose that base or collar 132 is fitted to the syringe barrel. In fact, Sweeney specifically discloses that its "base member 132 is rotationally connected to the hub 128." (Column 7, lines 18-19 and 29-30.)

Burns likewise fails to disclose its collar 48 being mounted to the syringe barrel. Rather, as clearly shown in Fig. 1 and disclosed throughout, Burns teaches that collar 48 is mounted to hub 20.

Gyure also discloses that a needle hub 28 is structurally formed to have a recess 34 that allows a collar 41 to be mounted thereabout. Again, there is no disclosure that collar 41 is to be mounted to the syringe barrel 70, or the claimed structure of the syringe barrel as set forth in claims 10 and 18.

Claims 16 and 24 each have been amended to define the proximal portion of the needle protective housing to include an opening at its back wall. The prior art does not teach such opening at a needle protection housing.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are patentably distinguishable over the prior art and the case is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the examiner is respectfully requested to enter this amendment, reconsider the claims and pass the case to issue at an early date.

In the event the examiner has suggestions to expedite the prosecution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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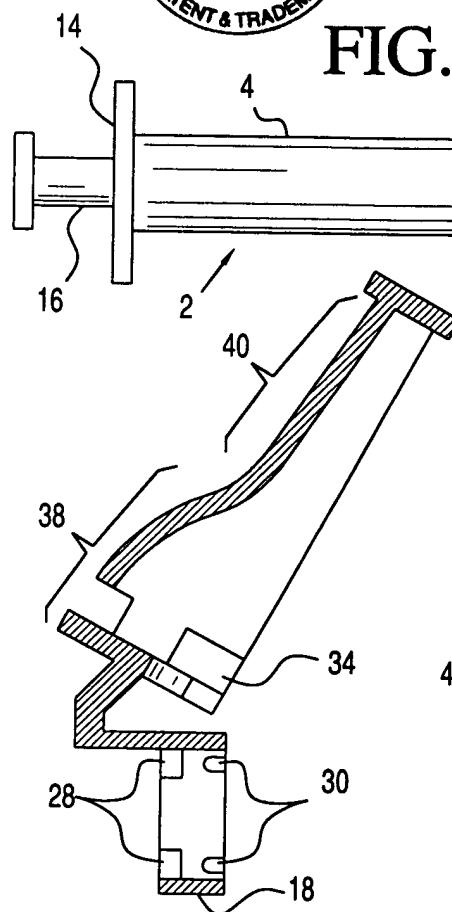


FIG.2

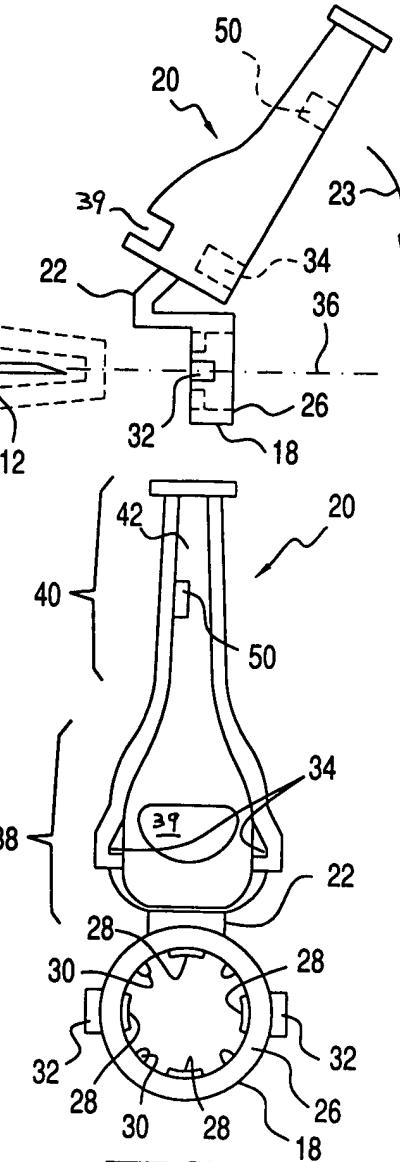


FIG.3

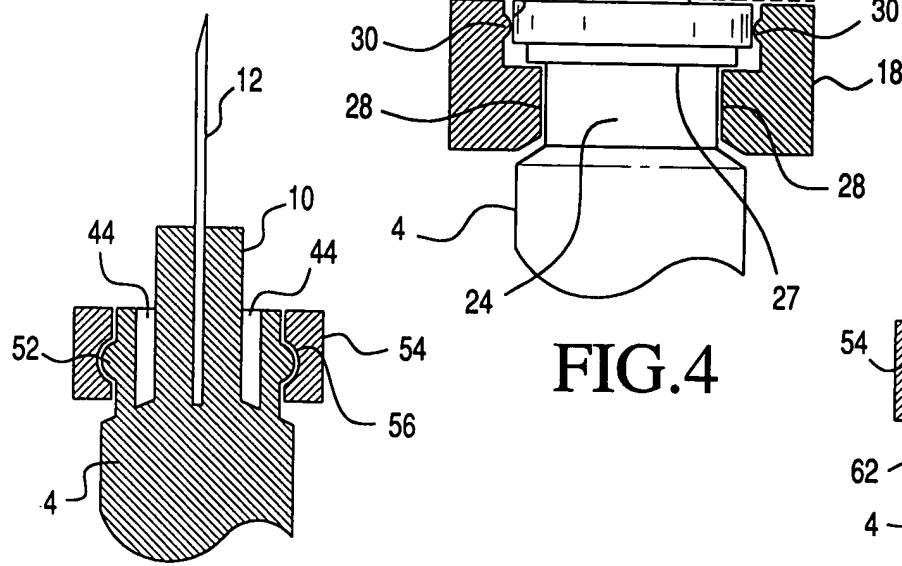


FIG.4

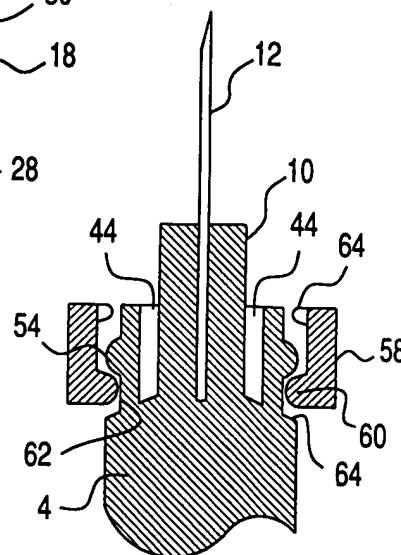


FIG. 6

